GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LABOUR
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2135
ANSWERED ON:06.08.2001
IMPOSITION OF LABOUR LAWS BY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES
RAM PRASAD SINGH

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether United States of America and other developed countries are trying to thrust labour laws through World Trade Organisation;

(b) if so, whether the Government have planned any strategy to counter the efforts of developed countries;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government are trying to make the domestic labour laws more effective and labour oriented; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL)

(a) to (c) The issue of linkage between trade and labour standards was proposed by some developed countries including USA in the First Ministerial Conference of the WTO held inSingapore in 1996. It was opposed by many developing countries including India. The Singapore Ministerial Declaration endorsed thestand of the developing countries and had rejected the use of labour standards for protectionist purposes. Further, it had reaffirmed that ILO is the competent body to set and deal with labour standards.

The issue again came up in the Third Ministerial Conference in Seattle in 1999.Though U S and other deveoped countries in the Seattle Ministerial Conference had proposed for creation of a Working Group to study tradeand labour linkage, the developing countries, including India, had succeeded in opposing the inclusion of trade and labour linkage in WTO. Government made it clear that there can be no linkage of trade and labour standards: India has been coordinating its position with other developing countries to ensure that no linkage bet ween trade and observance of labour standards is established in WTO.

(d) & (e) Review/updating of labour laws is a continuous process in order to bring them in conformity with the prevailing situation and emerging needs. Taking into consideration the emerging global economic situation and particularly after the introduction of the new economic policy by the Government, the need has been felt to make amendments in certain labour legislations and to make them in tune with the market oriented economy. The Government of India has set up the 2nd National Labour Commission on 15.10.1999 so that the existing labour laws are reviewed and brought in tune with the emerging economic environment, technological changes, labour market needs and demands.